

Washington, DC -- Senator Patrick Leahy, Senator Bernie Sanders, and Representative Peter Welch sent a letter today to Federal Emergency Management Agency Director David Paulison, urging the agency to be prepared for a possible flood in Montpelier.

The following letter (also attached) was sent by the Vermont delegation to Paulison today:

March 12, 2007

The Honorable R. David Paulison  
Director  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Director Paulison,

Yesterday marked the fifteenth anniversary of the destructive flood of 1992 in Montpelier, Vermont. We are concerned that similar circumstances are raising this threat again and that our capital city may be in danger of another flood event.

On March 11, 1992 large ice chunks carried by melt from a heavy winter's snowfall flowed down the Winooski River. These began to pile at a river's bend in the city. The water dammed and within minutes Montpelier was flooded. The water rose several feet, flooded the downtown and did not recede until the dam broke later in the evening. On this tragic day, many small businesses lost a good deal of their inventory and some never reopened. Many buildings were damaged and invaluable historical documents were lost or damaged. Final damage estimates remain near \$5 million.

Much like late winter of 1992, the Winooski River watershed is coping with melt from a significant snow pack. Currently, the river is frozen near Montpelier, with only a small flow channel. Ice from upstream will soon break up into smaller chunks which have strong potential for damming, causing flooding in or near Montpelier.

## Delegation Urges FEMA to Prepare for

Sunday, 11 March 2007 19:00

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Local merchants and homeowners, as well as state and local government agencies, are taking every possible precaution in the face of this threat, including moving inventory, drafting evacuation plans, and moving equipment. The city of Montpelier has posted evacuation and communication plans in case of quickly rising water and efforts are underway to melt the ice on the river.

We request that your agency be on alert in Montpelier, Vermont and surrounding areas and that you work closely with the Army Corps of Engineers and state and local officials to take any measures necessary to prevent a flood. Should the need arise, we urge you to respond immediately and with appropriate resources. FEMA should communicate with the public now about how it will respond in the worst case scenario.

Thank you for your immediate and diligent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator

BERNARD SANDERS  
United States Senator

PETER WELCH  
United States Congressman